

Sidestep these menu minefields

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(HealthDay)—People with food allergies aren't the only ones who need to be aware of menu minefields when eating out. If you're trying to lose weight, it's important that you don't fall prey to these temptations.

It's not only supersized meals that can be your diet downfall—restaurant meals in general have jumped in size. If you're not careful, the U.S. Department of Agriculture warns that the extra [calories](#) in a typical restaurant meal can mean a gain of two pounds a year for those who eat out just once a week. And, year after year, those pounds can really add up.

At breakfast, say no to over-the-top omelets. Eggs are healthy options at any meal, but dishes that smother them in cheese, sausages and other high-saturated fat ingredients can turn a simple 80-calorie egg into a [dish](#) with more than 1,000 calories.

Steer clear of oversized meat portions. A 3-ounce lean filet is a good once-in-a-while choice, but that tempting 16-ounce slab of prime rib delivers 1,400 calories even before you add in all the trimmings.

Pasta-and-protein dishes can more than double the calories of either a simply sauced dish of pasta or a broiled chicken breast, and even more when smothered with cheese or cream sauce.

A "personal" pizza sounds like a sensible serving, but it can come with far more calories than one gooey slice, especially if topped with an assortment of cured meats.

Chicken wings are one of the worst bangs for your buck because 75 percent of the calories come from fatty skin and breading, and provide little protein.

If you crave any of these dishes, make them at home where you can control ingredients and portion sizes.

More information: Every year the consumer watchdog group Center for Science in the Public Interest issues its [Xtreme Eating Awards](#) to

increase awareness about restaurant options to avoid.

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